

## Letter to the Editor

# Mass Gathering at Islamic Festival of Eid -Ul Adha May Spike up COVID-19 in Pakistan

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### Abstract

The main purpose of this letter is to raise concerns about the imminent spike in Covid-19 infection cases in Pakistan during the upcoming event of Eid Ul Adha, 2020, due to mass gathering of people in the cattle markets, especially from asymptomatic coronavirus carriers. As Pakistan is already facing insurmountable difficulties in managing Covid-19 due to its limited healthcare infrastructure, a more severe coronavirus-19 outbreak is expected in the post-Eid Ul Adha days, especially in big cities like Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad, posing a new challenge for the authorities.

**Keywords:** Eid Ul Adha, Covid-19, mass gathering, social distancing

### Резюме

Основната цел на това писмо е да изрази загриженост относно предстоящия скок на случаите на инфекция с Covid-19 в Пакистан по време на предстоящото събитие Eid Ul Adha, 2020 г., поради масово събиране на хора на пазарите за добитък, особено от асимптоматични носители на коронавирус. Тъй като Пакистан вече се сблъсква с непреодолими трудности при управлението на Covid-19 поради ограничената здравна инфраструктура, може да се очаква по-тежко огнище на коронавирус-19 в дните след Ейд Ул Адха, особено в големите градове като Лахор, Карачи и Исламабад, представяйки ново предизвикателство за властите.

### Dear Editor,

Mass congregation events are linked with key public health challenges (Memish *et al.*, 2019). Religious, social and other forms of the dense public mass gathering (DPMG) have remained one of the main sources of transmission of novel pathogens (Ebrahim and Memish, 2020). These mass gatherings may be preplanned like the Hajj, Eid-Ul Adha, Carnival, Namugongo Martyr's Day, Shanghai New Year celebrations or Olympics. Currently, the outbreak of zoonotic novel coronavirus (nCoV-19) from China in late December 2019 has imposed a health emergency all over the world. The developing countries are more at risk of infection due to lack of equipped healthcare infrastructure and poor international implementation plans due to lack of resources.

Currently, Pakistan is facing the worst coronavirus pandemic with 251 386 confirmed cases and 5 475 deaths ([ttp://covid.gov.pk](http://covid.gov.pk)). The graph of the daily confirmed cases is going down due to the well-planned policies of the Government of Pakistan and keen involvement of international health regulators, especially the World Health Organization. As the most prominent Islamic occasion of Eid Ul Adha 2020 is forthcoming (<https://www.timeanddate>), many acres of land are allocated on the edge of the cities for cattle markets, where thousands of people visit each day along with their friends and families to buy sacrificial animals. There are enormous threats of Covid-19 spike due to mass gathering of people in the cattle markets due to close person to person contact and person to animal contacts, ignoring social distancing policy.

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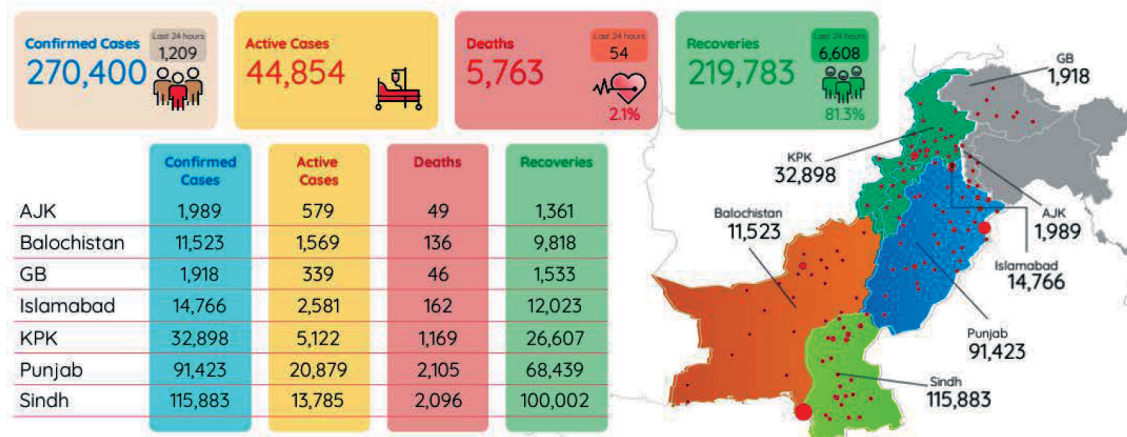


Fig. 1. Current Scenario of Covid-19 in Pakistan (Source: www.covid.gov.pk)

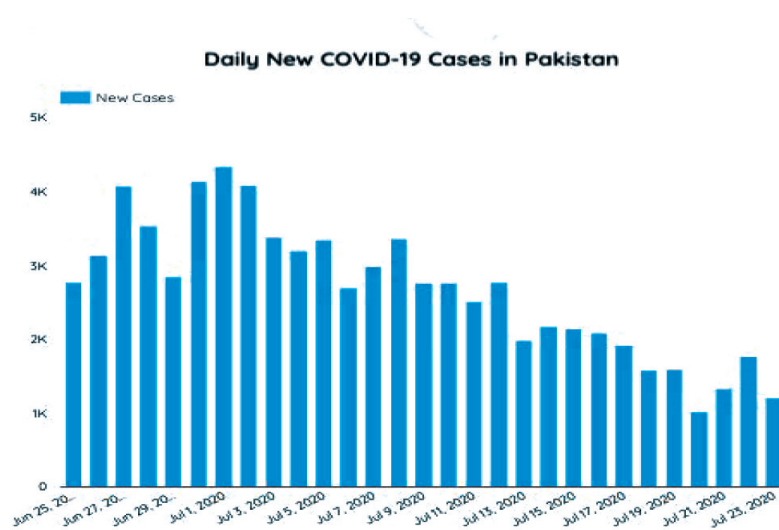


Fig. 2. Reducing graph of Covid-19 new cases in Pakistan

### Recommendations

Establishment of the cattle markets outside the cities with strict implementation of the measures issued by the Government of Pakistan.

Despite the fact that zoonotic transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in animals is not strong, people with Covid-19 home isolation should avoid interaction with household animals.

Use of surgical masks, social distancing and thermal screening should be ensured at cattle markets.

Crowding during entry and exit of cattle market should be avoided.

Routine hand shake and hugging after worship must be avoided.

### Acknowledgments

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